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A NOTABLE BOOK ON SEMITIC LITERATURE.

IN this handy little volume of only one hundred and forty-eight pages Mr. Joseph Jacobs has produced a real prize for Semitists, comparative religionists, and Old Testament scholars. The book opens with an introduction of twelve pages, in which the author summarizes brief critical thoughts on the essays which follow, as such may be suggested by new discoveries and corrected opinions. This is the only part that is strictly new (the body of the book being composed of reprints from specialist journals), and it contains a number of illustrative and accessory remarks of exceptional interest not only because they have been so recently penned, but because they come from one of the best scientific students of ancient literature and thought in England.

It is interesting to note how an eminent scholar, who differed largely, at least in detail, from Professor W. R. Smith, eulogizes that great master of philological and archæological science, now, alas! no more. He says:

It is especially from the point of view advocated in these pages that his loss causes so great a gap. . . . Lately, in his "Burnett Lectures," he struck out a line which connected Biblical archæology with the English method of research in anthropology. . . . His death has left us the method as a legacy, but I fear we must wait long before the rightful heir to his work and his method can claim inheritance. (Page xi.)

Mr. Jacobs himself is above all an archæologist—the originator, in fact, of some of the most important features of the science in its modern guise—but he is much more than this. He is an eminent philologist, historian, folklorist, and comparative religionist; and therefore his criticisms of various new books, as contained in this introduction, are most timely. We note his appreciation of two important ventures: first, the Clarendon Press "Hebrew Lexicon" (Brown and Driver), of which, while he admits that it "promises to bring He-

¹*Studies in Biblical Archæology.* By Joseph Jacobs. New York: Macmillan & Co.

brew lexicography up to the level of modern philological requirements, yet," he continues, "even with its excessive and Teutonic condensation of material, it still falls short of a true 'Thesaurus;' it is still a 'Handwörterbuch.'" Secondly, he has not much of praise for Professor Haupt's new critical edition of the Old Testament (is this due in a measure to a slight *odium philologicum*?), although he concedes that it will be a contribution toward settling the text. He rightly faults Professor Siegfried's "Job," the first volume issued, because it does not contain the *variorum conspectus* of the *variæ lectiones* from versions and commentators. Mr. Jacobs has felt the tidal wave of Septuagint revival just now passing over the scholarly world, a movement no doubt augmented by the recent letters of Sir Henry Howorth in *The Academy*, and he appreciates the real value of Professor Swete's *magnum opus*, the Cambridge critical text of the Septuagint. At the same time he affirms the Herculean character of the recovery of the *Ur—LXX.*—and one imagines that this affirmation is emphasized by a study of the method so magnificently outlined by Paul de Lagarde, which, could it be accomplished, would place the *LXX.*, as compared with the Massora, on the exact footing which Sir Henry Howorth claims for it *now*, but which it certainly does not hold.

Like most Semites, who are at the same time Semitists, Mr. Jacobs has little sympathy with what he calls the "slicing" of the Hexateuch. He argues that the literary side of Hexateuchal study has been carried to its extremest limit, and that, so far as it is concerned, many questions are hopelessly left in the lurch. In this deplorable case he advocates, with what the present reviewer must regard as justifiable insistence, the hitherto neglected witness of institutional archæology. This terminology is a comparatively new one, fathered by Mr. Jacobs himself, and we shall let him explain it in his own words:

Professor Sanday did me the honor to refer to my appeal to institutional archæology as pointing to a decisive criterion of the higher criticism. Professor Cheyne . . . retorts that the higher criticism has always used

archæology, and that I am an amateur. Professor Cheyne has failed to observe the distinction between what I should call physical archæology, the study of the material remains of man on the earth; and institutional archæology, the study of the survivals of his social organization. The higher criticism may have used the scanty remains of Semitic civilization. Till Fenton and Robertson Smith it has not used the comparative study of early institutions, on which subject, so far as I am aware, it is Professor Cheyne who is the amateur.

This brings us to one of the three important notes of the book, which comprise its main contribution to the literature of its subject.

As stated, Mr. Jacobs is before all else an archæologist, and his ceaseless iteration of the significance of archæological evidence for the scientific solution of the problems of Hebrew religion is notable and opportune. We can not help feeling that there lies under our hands a large mass of data which Old Testament scholars have most injudiciously neglected. We say Old Testament scholars because they of all students of ancient religious thought have sinned most stupidly in this respect. Comparative religion—that precocious child of recent birth—which we now perceive is destined to throw such unsuspected light on the historical study of the religious sentiment, is largely founded on just this very branch of human learning—certainly, at least, the anthropological as distinguished from the philological aspect of it. And why Old Testament specialists should have hesitated so long to avail themselves of material of the very same degree of value for their particular field which comparative religionists are using daily for theirs seems to us who are able to criticize our fathers from the vantage-ground of the year of grace 1898 heedlessly rash and wasteful.

But in furtherance of the good estate of Old Testament criticism, one notices several encouraging signs. Cheyne, and even Sanday, are doing much to repair needless “lapses of evidence” from archæology; and of course Professor Sayce, who deprecates extreme literary criticism as much as Mr. Jacobs, has done an efficient piece of work (“The Higher Criticism and the Monuments,” London, 1893) to counteract what we are all beginning to see was a one-sided enthu-

siasm, and to start things on a more logically proportioned course. In the opinion of the present writer the method of Old Testament research in the future is bound to be that which alone is scientific—viz., the method which is the basis of comparative religion: *comparison*. Broad-minded students of religion and its monuments will see here nothing to deplore, but will rejoice rather at the discovery of a valuable ancillary body of material too long ignored and only but recently accepted at its true value by those who have most need of its prolific contributions.

As illustrating the character of these contributions one may point to this volume as a whole, but in particular to the following essays, detailed analysis of which we can not lay before our readers. First, "Junior Right in Genesis" (*Archæological Review*, July, 1888), in which the author explains the insertion of some of the least edifying stories in the book by the existence of the institution known to the common law as "borough English" (the opposite of primogeniture), which probably obtained in the social organization of the early Hebrews, and by which the succession went to the youngest son. Now in later times, when the old folk-genealogies and narratives were being incorporated and combined into the Hexateuch, editorial or redactorial ingenuity interpolated these stories to explain why, contrary to the universal custom of the editor's age, the succession went to the youngest. The application of data interpreting these tales by the "ultimogeniture" of institutional archæology is certainly a felicitous and clever process; and even if one considers it at times fanciful, one sees how rich this material is, in general, and how obviously appropriate its employment in many obscure reaches of the Hebrew religious documents. We may direct what Mr. Jacobs says of Professor Smith to himself: he gives us a method, clearly the *right* method of studying many a classical *crux interpretum*, which, by the old system, was destined perennially to flaunt its riddle.¹

¹As a further illustration of this "method," cf. Professor Ryle's suggestive little book, the "Early Narratives of Genesis." Macmillan, 1892.

The second essay to which we attach particular significance is: "Are There Totem Clans in the Old Testament?" This is a fresh and luminous examination of a subject which, since first opened by the progress of anthropological research in recent years, has attracted the attention of Semitists and comparative religionists. Mr. Jacobs takes as his text Professor W. R. Smith's well-known article in the *Journal of Philology* (Vol. IX, 1880), "Animal-Worship and Animal Tribes among the Ancient Arabs and in the Old Testament." The conclusions reached in this paper, and in his "Religion of the Semites" by the Cambridge Arabist, are familiar now to all students. Space forbids that we do more than summarize the results of Mr. Jacobs' fresh examination of them, which we are glad to be able to do in his own words:

1. If anthropology teaches that the totem arrangement is a necessary development, there are sufficient indications of such arrangement in the names of the Edomite clans. (Gen. xxxvi.)

2. There are sufficient "survivals" of totemism in the names of the Israelite clans, their forbidden food, personal names, tattooing, family feasts, and blood-avengers to render it likely that they once had a totem organization like the other *B'nê Abraham*.

3. But there are no signs of the actual existence of totemism in historic times among the Hebrews, such as Professor Smith contends for in the cases of David and the crucial passage, Ez. viii. 11.

He appends a list of persons bearing animal and plant names, which he thinks "practically exhausts the subject," in which he expands Professor Smith's list of thirty to one hundred and sixty. This list alone is a most valuable tabulation, containing the latest etymological researches of prominent Hebraists, valuable not only for Old Testament specialists, but for folklorists and anthropologists.¹

The third and last essay to which we refer as especially noteworthy along these lines is called "Recent Research in Comparative Religion." (*Folk-Lore*, September, 1890.) It is a review of four "epoch-making" books, as the Germans say, in this field, which had just then been published, but the article is as seasonable now as when writ-

¹In all this compare Mr. Gray's new book, "Studies in Hebrew Proper Names." (Black.)

ten, particularly as the material which Professor Smith prepared before his death has just seen the light in the new edition of his book. The works reviewed are: "The Religion of the Semites," W. R. Smith; "The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion, J. G. Frazer; "The Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan People, O. Schrader; "The Origin of the Aryans," Isaac Taylor." When we say that some of the criticisms are inadequate and at times almost trivial, we must still urge that the reading of the four books should certainly be followed by a careful study of this paper. The essay is intensely interesting, and it is disappointing that we have not space to give a synopsis. But the opening paragraph offers an idea of the treatment:

The first two books on our list are a veritable triumph for folk-lore, and especially for that conception of the science which has been consistently advocated by the Folk-Lore Society. Here we have two books dealing with the primitive religion of the two great groups of nations from which civilization has obtained its chief spiritual material, and both avowedly appeal to folk-lore for methods of investigation and for corroborative criteria. Both use freely the analogy of savage custom and ritual to explain those of Semites and Aryans. Both apply with confidence the method of "survivals" in order to reconstruct the primitive systems from which the survivals derive. The two books deal with the deepest problems of human thought, and neither disdains, in seeking their solution, the light that may be obtained from folk-tales, superstitions, and even games, those seemingly trivial remnants of older ways of thinking which folk-lore collects or investigates. (Pages 29, 30.)

Of the remaining papers we must speak with great brevity. The fifth, "The Nethinim" (*Babylonian and Oriental Record*, February and March, 1888), is an ingenious attempt to explain the origin of the degraded beings whose names are given in Ezra ii. and Nehemiah vii. In a word, Mr. Jacobs thinks they were the descendants of the sacred prostitutes attached to the temple before the exile. This result is based largely on the fact that the names as given in the Massoretic text are almost without exception those of women, or at least feminine in form, and therefore "we state with a considerable degree of confidence that the Nethinim could only trace their ancestry up to women." (Page 114.) That these women were prostitutes is inferred

from the same reason that we infer promiscuity in the primitive stages of human society—viz., because of the institution called the “matriarchate,” which owed its existence, in the pugnacious solution of Mr. McLennan, to the truth that maternity was a fact; paternity, a theory. Professor Ryle, in his “Ezra and Nehemiah” (“Cambridge Bible for Schools”), combats Mr. Jacobs’ conclusion very lamely, as it seems to us—*e. g.*, he dismisses the evidence from the feminine form of the words by the statement: “The peculiar termination of the names derives a natural explanation from their foreign extraction,” which is a simple *petitio principii*, and entirely fails to meet Mr. Jacobs’ contention.

The last two papers, “The Indian Origin of Proverbs xxx.” and “The Revised Old Testament” (*Athenæum*, May 15 and 22, 1885), are rather “thin.” The first is an antiquated use of the “double-column dodge,” happily so called by Mr. S. R. Crockett (*Academy*, November 24, 1894), which has but little place in work of this kind. This stricture must not be taken, however, as inveighing against the legitimate study of the transmission of folk-tales, apologies, fables, etc.—*e. g.*, Bidpai, Kalilah-w-Dimnah, variants of Solomon’s judgment, and the like. And the second is evidently, and almost admittedly, a hastily prepared criticism (p. 147), the very opening words of which (“The revision of the Old Testament is a literary success, but it has no pretensions to scholarly completeness. . . . The literary merits of the Authorized Version have been retained, and, on the whole, enhanced”) have been again and again disproved by the careful examinations of the work by eminent scholars. (*Vide* volumes of the *Expositor* for 1885–87.) We think Mr. Jacobs seriously underrates the improvement of the Revised Version over the Authorized Version in the matter of scholarship and the general accuracy of translation. For ourselves, we recommend the two versions as the best of their kind in two distinct spheres: the Authorized Version for devotional and literary purposes, and the Revised Version for student and lecture use.

Summing up this important little book, there are three things in it of note: first, the stress laid on the illustrative resources of institutional archæology; second, the importance and significance of the study of comparative religion and of religion; third, the hesitating, almost shrinking attitude assumed toward the further literary criticism of the documents of the Hexateuch. We think Mr. Jacobs' animadversions on this last, which sometimes approach ridicule, both unscholarly and unjustified, but the positions taken in general will be interesting not only to Semitists and higher critics, but to the larger body of practical students of theological thought and to the parochial clergy.

WILLIS HATFIELD HAZARD.